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CORRESPONDENCE.

INSTINCT.

MR. EDITOR,—In the course of our observations on what is called the *brute* creation, we must all have remarked striking indications of these animals possessing faculties corresponding, though in different degrees, to the faculty of reason in man. Many theories have been invented to explain their actions; some founded on erroneous views of their œconomy and habits; some on mistaken notions as to the *dignity* of human nature; and others on futile attempts to distinguish *instinctive* from *rational* motives. From the attention I have given to this subject, I am satisfied that no such distinction exists, and that the *reasoning* faculty itself is only a modification of instinct.

There are evidently three sorts of instinct; 1st, *pure* instinct; 2d, instinct which accommodates itself to particular circumstances and situations; and 3d, instinct that is improveable by experience or observation.

By the first of these, that is, pure instinct, are meant such as, independently of all instruction or experience, *instantaneously* produce certain actions when particular objects are presented to animals; or when they are influenced by particular feelings. Such are, in the human species, the instinct of *sucking*, which is exerted by the infant immediately after birth; the voiding of *fœces*; and the retraction of the muscles on the application of any *painful* stimulus. The love of *light* is exhibited by infants, even so early as the third day after birth: the passion of *fear* is discoverable in a child at the age of two months.

Among the inferior animals, there are a number of pure instincts. Caterpillars, shaken off a tree in every direction, turn immediately to the trunk and climb up. Young birds open their mouths on hearing any noise, as well as that of their mother's voice. Every species of insect deposits its eggs in the situation most proper for hatching and affording nourishment to its future progeny. Some animals look out to future wants; others, as the bee and the beaver, are endowed with an instinct, which has the appearance of *foresight*. They construct magazines, and fill them with provisions. Bees, in particular, display various remarkable instincts. They attend and feed the female, or queen. When deprived of her, all their labors cease till a new one is obtained. They construct cells of three different dimensions—for working bees—for drones, and for females; and the queen, in depositing her eggs, puts each species into its appropriated cell. They destroy all the females

but one, lest the hive should be overstocked. The different instincts of the common bee, of the wood-piercing bee, and of that species which builds cylindrical nests with *rose leaves*, are truly remarkable. Equally singular are the instincts of wasps, and ichneuman flies, which, although they do not themselves feed on worms, lay up stores of these insects for the nourishment of their young.

Birds build their nests of the same materials, and in the same form and situation, though they inhabit very different climates. They turn and shift their eggs, that they may be equally heated. Geese and ducks cover up their eggs till they return to the nest. The swallow solicits her young to void their excrement over the nest, and assists them in the operation. Spiders, and many insects of the beetle kind, when put in terror, counterfeit death. This is not, as has been supposed, *convulsion* or *stupor*, but an *artifice*; for when the object of terror is removed, they immediately recover.

Of the second kind of instincts, namely, that which can accommodate themselves to peculiar circumstances and situations, there are innumerable instances. Those animals are most perfect, whose sphere of knowledge extends to the greatest number of objects. When interrupted in their operations, they know how to resume their labors, and to accomplish their purposes by different means. Some animals have no other power but that of contracting or extending their bodies. But the falcon, the dog, and the fox, pursue their prey with intelligence and address. In Senegal, the Ostrich sits on her eggs only during the *night*, leaving them during the day to the influence of the sun. At the Cape of Good Hope, where the heat is not so great, she sits on them day and night. Rabbits when domesticated, are not inclined to burrow. Bees, increase the depth and the number of their cells as occasion requires. A wasp removing a dead companion from the nest, if he finds it too heavy, cuts off the head, and carries out the load in two portions. In countries infested with monkeys, birds, which in other countries, build in bushes or clefts of trees, suspend their nests at the end of tender twigs. The nymphæ of water moths, which cover themselves with cases of straw, gravel or shells, contrive to make their cases nearly in equilibrium with the water: when too heavy, they add a bit of wood or straw, when too light, a bit of gravel.

The third class of instincts comprehends all those that are improvable by experience and observation. The superiority of man over other animals, seems to depend chiefly on the *great number* of instincts with which he is endowed. Traces of every instinct which he possesses, are discoverable in the brute creation, but no *particular species enjoys the whole*. On the contrary, most animals are limited to a small number. This appears to be the reason why the instincts of brutes are stronger, and more steady in their operations than those of man, and their actions more uniform.

Most human instincts receive improvement from experience and observation, and are capable of a thousand modifications. One instinct counteracts and modifies another; and frequently extinguishes the original motive to action. The instinct of *fear* is often counteracted by *ambition*, and by *resentment*: the instinct of *anger*, by *fear*, by *shame*,

by *contempt*, by *compassion*. *Devotion* is an extension of the instinct of *love*, to the supposed first cause, or author of the universe. *Superstition* is the instinct of *fear* extended to *imaginary objects of terror*. *Hope* is the instinct of *love*, directed to *future good*. *Avarice* is the instinct of *love*, directed to an *improper object*. *Fear* is likewise an ingredient of *avarice*. *Envy* is compounded of *love*, *avarice*, *ambition*, and *fear*. *Sympathy* is the instinct of *fear* transferred to another person, and reflected back on ourselves. In this manner, all the modified, compounded, or extended passions of the human mind, may be traced back to their original instincts.

The instincts of brutes are likewise improved by *observation* and *experience*. Of such improvement, the dog, the elephant, the horse, and the camel, afford numerous and conclusive instances.

From these examples of the different classes of instincts, it seems obvious that instinct is an *original* quality of the mind, which, in man, as well as in other animals, may be *improved*, *modified*, and *extended* by experience. *Sensation* implies a sentient principle, or *mind*. Whatever *feels*, therefore, is *mind*. Of course, the lowest species of animals are endowed with mind. But the minds of these animals have very *different* powers; and these powers are expressed by *peculiar* actions. The structure of their bodies is uniformly adapted to the powers of their minds; and no animal, arrived at maturity, attempts actions which nature has not enabled it to perform. The instincts, however, of animals appear often previously to the expansion of those instruments which nature intended they should employ.

This view of instinct is simple; it removes every objection to the existence of mind in brutes, and unfolds all their actions, by referring them to motives perfectly similar to those by which man is actuated. There is, perhaps, a greater difference between the mental powers of some animals, than between those of man and the most sagacious brutes. Instincts may be considered as so many *internal* senses, of which some animals have a greater, and others a smaller number. These senses are likewise more or less *ductile*, in different species; and the animals possessing them are, of course, more or less susceptible of improving, and acquiring knowledge.

The notion that animals are *unintellectual* machines, or a sort of automata, is too absurd to merit refutation. Though not endowed with mental powers equal to those of man, they possess, in some degree, every faculty of the human mind. Sensation, memory, imagination, the principle of imitation, curiosity, cunning, ingenuity, devotion, or respect for superiors, fidelity, gratitude, are all discoverable in the brute creation. Every species, too, has a *language*, either of sounds or gestures, sufficient for the individuals to communicate their wants to each other; and some animals understand, in part, the language of man. The language of infants is nearly on a par with that of brutes. Brutes, without some portion of reason, could never make a proper use of their senses. But many animals are capable of *balancing motives*, which is a pretty high degree of reason. Young animals *examine* all objects they meet with, and in this investigation they employ all their organs.

The first periods of their life are dedicated to *study*. When they run about, and make frolicsome gambols, it is *nature sporting with them for their instruction*. Thus they gradually improve their faculties, and acquire an intimate knowledge of the objects that surround them. Men who, from peculiar circumstances, have been prevented from mingling with companions, and engaging in the different amusements and exercises of youth, are always awkward in their movements; cannot use their organs with ease or dexterity; and even continue during life, ignorant of the most common agents, and incapable of taking a part in the most ordinary conversations.

Why is it, that these facts, which evidently lead to a conclusion favorable to the mental faculties of many inferior animals, should have been so far disregarded, in almost every country, as to lead mankind to inflict the cruelest tortures on them? It is because the priests of religion are every where arrayed against knowledge and science. Although the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus has declared in the most explicit manner, that "a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast;" that "as the one dieth, so dieth the other," it has been found so impracticable to reconcile this doctrine with the *spiritualities* of religion, that its professors, even while contending that *every part* of the bible is inspired, persist in denying that brutes, who are there placed on a level with man, as to the possession of a distinct essence, are entitled, in any sense of the word, to that distinction. They cry up the *dignity* of human nature; that man was formed after the *divine image*; and that it would be derogatory to the majesty of heaven, to admit brutes to the same rank as man. In this, as well as in most other instances, they forget, that such reasoning involves them in absurdity and contradiction; for it is the main prop of religion, that man is a *fallen* being; *naturally wicked, a child of the devil*, and an *heir of hell*. The truth is, the clergy are aware that it would not promote their interest, to allow the inferior animals the possession of any faculty indicating intelligence. If they did admit this, and, of necessity, could not avoid *preaching* to them, they would derive no pecuniary advantage from their labor, which would be much more incessant and arduous than in teaching men. They might produce an astonishing, and in many instances, a beneficial, effect on brutes, were they to study their economy and habits. Witness the advantages derived from well trained horses, dogs, camels, elephants, and oxen. Even hogs, by attention, in some countries, are rendered useful in husbandry, and it is well known that they have been brought up to the same use as the pointer, in the sports of the field. But this would be attended with immense toil; and *labor* is that, above all things, which the priesthood abhor. They find the *animal man*, sufficiently submissive and complying; and by cajoling, flattering, and terrifying him, as it suits their purpose, they are certain of success. As long as the deception continues; as long as they convince their credulous dupes, that science is false, and that there is no happiness but within the pale of the church, they will enjoy, without any great effort, an abundance of the good things of this life.

VERITAS.

WHAT IS GOD?

DEAR SIR,—As the priestly editors of “Zion’s Herald,” the “Portsmouth (N. H.) Repository,” the “Essex Gazette,” and “Dover Republican,” have thought proper to maintain a prudent silence towards me, since my reply to their foul attack on me, which appeared in No. 17, Vol. II. of your “Correspondent,” they leave me to conclude they are ashamed of their holy effusions, and are destitute of physical demonstration for their idol of worship, the coloured print of which (“THE GOD OF THE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS. THE GREAT JEHOVAH OR THE TRINITY IN UNITY”) the “Zions Herald called a “*caricature*.” Now, Sir, if the bible character of him and description of his person be a “*caricature*,” where are we to look for the identity, and description of the character of this superhuman intelligent being?

The bible *character* of God, compiled by some searcher of the scriptures, which appeared in No. 8 Vol. III, of your periodical, no doubt is a “*caricature*” too. All which that article wants to make it complete, is the bible “*caricature*” of the *form* of his person, which says that “His *head* and *hair* were white like wool, and his eyes were as a flame of fire,” Rev. i, 14. “Out of his *mouth* went a sharp two-edge sword” v. 16. “There went up smoke out his *nostrils*, fire out of his *mouth*; devoured coals were kindled by it,” Psalms, xviii, 8. “Clothed in the garment down to the *feet* and girt about the *paps* with a golden girdle,” Rev. i, 13. “He had horns coming out of his *hands* and burning coals went forth at his feet,” Hab’k. iii, 4. “And his *feet* like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace,” Rev. i, 15. Now for his residence, which, it seems, is somewhere in the material Universe, for “Round about him were dark waters and *thick clouds of the skies*,” Psalms xviii, 11. One of the above *caricatures*, who we are told executed his share of the form of deity, was St. John in the Island of Patmos. But Bishop Marsh, vol. I page 320, tells us, that “Erasmus wrote it himself in Switzerland, in the year 1516.”

Since we can find nothing but *caricature* in the christian bible, in answer to the question “What, or where is God?” let us explore the *bible of nature*; that which cannot lie, nor the priests corrupt. We are told that “there is a God all nature cries aloud.” It may be our ignorance of all nature that so cries aloud. That it may be very apparent to the unthinking, or by a mere superficial glance at nature, that a superhuman intelligence must have originated the whole of the natural phenomena we behold, we must admit; and that it is as palpably evident, and was formerly as universally believed that the sun moved round our earth. But the progress of science has shown this appearance to the eye to be quite the reverse. Seeing how appearances are but too apt to mislead us, it behoves every individual to bring his faith to the test of *fact*, instead of contenting ourselves with the ignorance of former ages.

As the word God, among Christians, and all other religionists, is positively said to be the sign of an existing superhuman intelligence—where or what is it? Is the idea attached to the word, a real or a chimerical one? Confucius and Francis Bacon both asserted that we ought to endeavor to get a knowledge of *things* rather than *words*. “WHAT IS

God?" asked the first Grecian philosophers. 'He is the most ancient of all things; for he is without beginning,' said Thales. 'He is air and mind,' said Archelaus. 'He is mind in a spherical form,' said Democritus. 'He is a monod, and the principle of good,' said Pythagoras. 'He is an eternal circular fire,' said Heraclitus. 'He is the infinite and immovable principle in a spherical form,' said Parmenides. 'He is one and every thing,' said Melissus and Zeno, 'the only eternal and infinite.' These were subjects in which the profoundest might have discovered the most ample exercise for itself; but to the Greek a vacuity was still left; necessity, fate and fortune, or accident, filled it up.

"The *Universe* furnished another set of disputations. 'What is, has ever been, and the world is eternal,' said one party. 'The world is not eternal, but matter is eternal,' argued another party. Was this matter susceptible of forms of one, or of many? Was it water, or air, or fire? Was it an assemblage of atoms, or an infinite number of incorruptible elements? Had this matter subsisted without movement in chaos, or had it an irregular movement? Did the world appear by intelligence communicating its action to it, or did God ordain it by penetrating it with a part of his essence?" (No 3, vol. 8, of Mr. Carlyle's *Republican*.)

The question, 'What, or where is God?' has comparatively lain dormant since the introduction of Christianity; and it was not until the sciences of late, have so progressed, in spite of the combined efforts of priests, that this question has dared to be publicly asked, and answered by a six years' imprisonment of one, and of others three; besides fines and ill treatment in gaol.

That 'our faith ought to be regulated by facts,' I presume is what no sentimentally honest man will deny, but profess by practice. The importance of the truth of the existence of a personified being, called God, must be apparent to every lover of Truth; and if no such being should exist as described by Theists, what a mental degradation it must be to man to be a *slave* to a non-existence, worse than the worship of the sun. The effects which the belief of a God has produced in past, and passing time, renders this question of the utmost importance to every individual. If this belief is erroneous, he who labors to free mankind from mental thralldom, by arresting his wandering imagination, and fixing him within the bounds of knowledge, must be a philanthropist. [Some have been educated to believe there was a time when matter did not exist; and some allow it existed eternally unorganized; and exterior to it, an intelligent being awoke from an eternity of idleness, and created the Universe, or all that is known of the phenomena of Nature. That the evidence for the object of our belief ought to bear an equal proposition to each other, is but reasonable; but for mind to exist independent of matter, or the organs of sensation, there is much reason to doubt. On what evidence the prior existence of intelligence to matter is founded, I know not; and if he be not exterior or distinct from matter, he must be material and human. That something must have existed from eternity, is evident, or there would not have been any thing in existence—for nothing could not make something.]

I am told there must be a '*First Cause*,' from which matter and its

organization must have emanated. What definite meaning can be traced from these words? We can trace from fixed to fluid matter, and from the fluid we go back to fixed. There is a continual change and interchange in silent operation throughout the Universe. As Sir Richard Phillips observes, 'it is certain that motion (or matter) is as old as the Universe; that it will continue to exist as never dying power for millions of years, or to all eternity. Now in the sun, then in the atoms of space, diverged through space, caught by the earth, absorbed by the atmosphere, received by a horse in its lungs, displayed in its muscles, transferred to a coach wheel, by it to the mass of earth, and as heat to the atoms, rubbed by the wheel, returned again to the atmosphere, dispersed in the gas of space, scattered to the planets and back again to the sun; incessantly active, conferring power, *never beginning*, never dormant, *never ending*,' &c. If then a 'first cause' cannot be ascertained, let us cease to talk about it as an idle speculation.

Could the Universe have come by '*chance*?' is another question that is triumphantly asked by the Theist. But as this implies a beginning, or a first cause, which has not yet been demonstrated, the word *chance* has no definite meaning, unless as a cover for an ignorance of all the minute bearings on the events and circumstances that are continually passing.

The *existence* and *form* of *Man*, is considered as decisive in proof of the existence and form of a GOD-MAN. Apply this argument to Deity, and we have an *ad infinitum* of Gods; each increasing successively in magnitude of powers. If a thing cannot exist in form without being designed, then neither can Deity; and as the word design cannot be separated from its connective with intelligence, to allow natural organization to be termed design, and not the *form* of DEITY, would be accepting the proposed proof as truth, without discussion or demonstration. The Theist, in this instance, surely strains at a gnat, yet swallows a camel, as that must be in some form or other that possesses intelligence, having a conscious state of his own existence and the whole of the Universe. We have ocular demonstration that human intelligence can design; and why not the evidence for the existence of Deity be equally as strong, or more so as the object of belief, or for our belief, is the most important? Instead of this, his existence is founded upon mere hypothesis, or upon an ignorance of the secret process necessary to the production of vegetable and animal compounds.

How presumptuous and irrational would the Theist think the man that required him to exhibit his God in the act of organizing animals, &c. before he could give his assent; yet he is himself as absurd, by requiring a full explanation "*how*" the secret powers of matter organize. Does the Theist know more of the material phenomena than the materialist? If he does, he can instruct him. Where knowledge exists, it can be communicated; where it cannot, we may rest assured such knowledge is merely pretended; and that those who do this are on a par with the quack. They are dishonest in sentiment to themselves and all around them. If a spiritual substance is so distinct from matter, how can it amalgamate with it so as to fill all space at one time? That

which fills all space must leave no room for any thing but its own substance. If so, it is synonymous with materiality, for this last is evident to our senses; and if it does not fill all space, where is it located?

It is utterly impossible to conceive for a moment the existence of intelligence unconnected with matter. It is dependent on organization, as much as is the sound of music on a musical instrument. If intelligence be nothing more than animal experience, which grows out of organization, how can it be otherwise than material, seeing that it is generated from a material source? To illustrate the materiality of ideas, we need only witness their growth by experience in infants, and other animal organizations. The sense of sight in an infant may be so affected by the brilliancy of a lamp or candle, and excite in it a desire to grasp the same. Allow it to gratify that desire, and the combustible matter will so operate on its sense of feeling, as to create a sensation of pain and an idea of the effect of heat on the sense of feeling. Hoping the subject of an intelligent Deity may be more generally discussed,

I remain yours, in the cause of Truth.

JOSEPH LAWTON.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 1828.

Liberal Tracts.—To meet the great and increasing demand for these Tracts, the 1st and 2d numbers are reprinting. No's 3 and 4, are also nearly ready for delivery, at the *Depository* 422 Broadway. Those transmitting orders from the country, are requested to say in what way they wish the Tracts forwarded.

The accounts we are receiving from all quarters, confirm the opinion we entertained when the Tract Fund was formed, that it would operate more powerfully in overthrowing priestcraft, than any other scheme that could be devised. Aware of this, the clergy are every where alarmed, and devising methods to counteract the immense (and to them fatal) influence which the diffusion of correct principles must have on the community. While the press was employed in disseminating *religious* tracts, in which Science was stigmatized as a pest, and Reason unblushingly contemned, it was hailed as the greatest, as the most beneficial discovery ever made by man. But the moment it is employed to unmask hypocrisy, and to inculcate genuine morality, it is represented as the greatest evil with which humanity could be afflicted, as calculated to render mankind bloodthirsty savages, and completely to demoralize society. We have now before us several letters depicting the furor displayed by the clergy, in different parts of the country, on ascertaining that *Liberal Tracts* were in circulation. "It was so ordered," says one correspondent, "that a presbyterian minister read them, and, Christian like, he was in a violent passion; for no doubt, with him and all the priesthood, this was a course little expected, and as it is adopted, they well know it will prove such a weapon as they deserve."

It was to be expected that these "meek and pious" ministers of religion, which, while it speaks "peace and good will to men," produces nothing but discord, hatred, and warfare, would not rest satisfied with merely showing dislike, or even rage, at the appearance of our tracts.

It was necessary they should infuse a portion of their "holy ire" into their ignorant and superstitious dupes, whose bad passions they always know how to turn to their own account. Accordingly, we are informed by a correspondent, residing in a northern county of this state, who had been active in circulating Liberal Tracts among his neighbours, that they "are all up in arms against me, and threaten to indite me before the Grand Jury of Albany, for distributing blasphemy, or blasphemous tracts. My shop has been shamefully assaulted and my person abused and insulted. But, thanks to fortune, I can, and will govern my temper and conduct towards these fanatics, with a manly fortitude and patience, which in the end will convince some of the enraged populace, that our principles are as good, if not better than those of our persecutors."

Nothing could afford a more decisive proof of the mental thralldom in which the people of this country are held by their spiritual tyrants, than the facts mentioned in the above letter. It is impossible that any one whose mind is not benumbed by superstition, and completely devoted to the will of an artful priest, could have so far departed from the fundamental and obvious principles of justice, as to commit an assault on the person and property of another, merely because that other entertained opinions different from his, and endeavored to promulgate them in the same way that he promulgated the tenets of his creed. To maintain the reverse, would be a libel on common sense, and on that part of the Declaration of Rights (Art. XII.) which says, "the people have a right to freedom of speech, and of writing and publishing their sentiments; therefore the freedom of the press ought not to be restrained." It would be a libel on the United States' Constitution, which provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion; or prohibition of the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government of grievances." And it would be a libel on the Constitution of this state, Art. 38 of which ordains, determines and declares, "that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, *without discrimination or preference*, shall forever hereafter be allowed within this state, to *all mankind*. Provided that the liberty of conscience hereby granted, shall not be so construed, as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of this state."

We have every reason to believe that the priesthood are extremely desirous of imposing restrictions on the press in this country, and would cheerfully, after the example of their brethren in Europe, consign to a dungeon or lead to the stake all those who are engaged in publishing sentiments opposed to their religious dogmas. But, notwithstanding the advances which they have, within these few years, made towards the establishment of a national religion, we are persuaded there is sufficient patriotism in the country to arrest any attempt that might be made by a religious faction, to prostrate our liberties. "The legitimate powers of government (as remarked by Jefferson) reach *actions* only, and not *opinions*. I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no

law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;" thus building a wall of separation between church and state. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights; convinced he has no natural rights in opposition to his social duties."

Such we believe to be the sentiments and feelings of at least four fifths of the population of the United States; and had this large portion of our citizens *moral* courage equal to their physical strength, no individual in this country would be under any apprehension of annoyance from bigotry or fanaticism.

The following remarks on the utility of "Liberal Tracts," are from the *New Harmony Gazette* of the 2d July. Although nearly two months have elapsed since it was publicly announced that these Tracts were about to be published, no notice of the fact has appeared in any other paper.

"This has been long a desideratum, and all interested in the course of human improvements must wish well to these labors of the "Free Press." Religious tracts absolutely flood the country. "A Word of Grace"—"Peeps at Heaven"—Sighs of the sweet Jesus"—"Tears of Contrite Sinners"—"Lives of Martyrs"—"Songs of Saints," and "Last agonies of Infidels," beset us every where; frightning little children in the nursery, old women in their arm chairs, and ignorant invalids on their couches. The case of these last is pitable. The body's weakness increasing that of the mind, many a poor creature expires before his time; the imaginary flames of Hell outdoing in their effects the fire of fever. May the Tracts of the "Free Press" supply antidotes to the poison which has so deeply envenomed the popular mind, and give a new tone to popular feeling, thinking and practice."

Building Churches.—In the 10th number of Vol. III. of the *Correspondent*, we published a communication, on the pernicious practice of crowding the country with churches, for no other purpose than to give eclat to the clergy, and countenance to the delusions which they teach; and that at an expense burthensome to the people, which might be applied to much greater advantage in educating the rising generation. In the *Gospel Advocate* of the 19th inst. there is an account of the proceedings of the Universalist Society in the village of Auburn, by which it appears that its members, who had previously raised by subscription a sum of money for the purpose of erecting a building for public worship, afterwards unanimously resolved not to expend the money in that way, but to apply it to the general dissemination of useful knowledge. The motives which led to this important change in the appropriation, are thus explained in the report of the committee:—

"From recent disclosures, made in a tone of defiance, and with that degree of assurance calculated to excite the most fearful apprehensions, uttered too by men whose persons we have long been accustomed to respect, we have been driven to the conclusion, that a powerful and well-organized body of religionists has been industriously engaged in those

measures which cannot fail to jeopardize the dearest rights and liberties of mankind.

“That order of professing Christians generally denominated Presbyterians, though not so numerous, are nevertheless more powerful than any other sect in America. The power and influence they possess has not been obtained by their mental or moral superiority over others, but has been acquired by their persevering efforts to obtain money under various pretences, and by every means within their reach to aggrandize their own sect, and extend their own resources. To such an astonishing extent have they succeeded in their measures, that, in the opinion of your committee, a large portion of the circulating medium of this country is under their control and subject to their disposal. Their various institutions falsely called “charitable Societies,” have been suffered to accumulate immense sums of money, which when obtained are left at the disposal of those who are responsible, not to the donors but to the managers of such institutions. In several cases which have fallen under the notice of the public, money obtained for some specific purpose has been appropriated to the attainment of other objects without the consent of the donors; and in many instances money has been solicited and obtained on pretences not founded in fact.

“While many of our citizens, (particularly the laboring classes) are groaning under the pressure of the times, and frequently suffering for the want of means to maintain and educate their families, immense sums are annually expended for the erection of splendid temples of worship, theological seminaries, buildings for the accommodation of sectarian institutions, and for the education and maintenance of an idle and oftentimes an useless priesthood.

“It is our solemn conviction that the general dissemination of useful knowledge is the only means by which the liberties of our country can be perpetuated. And this fact, too generally admitted to require proof, leads us to the conclusion that neither aristocracies of wealth, honor, learning, or religious power, can be compatible with the welfare of our country.—It is therefore a duty, in the opinion of your committee, which devolves on every enlightened member of society, to pursue that course which may be most likely to lead to the more general dissemination of science, to a greater improvement of the arts of civilized life, and, as an dispensible pre-requisite, to the prostration of those plans which confine the benefits of education and the emoluments religion to a few to the serious inconvenience and lasting detriment of the many.

“From an estimate which has been submitted at a previous meeting of this society, it appears that an enormous tax has been imposed upon the people for the erection of meeting houses and the support of ministers. On the supposition that there are in the state of New York 630 towns, and that each town, including our cities, contains three houses of public worship, there would be One thousand Eight hundred and Ninety meeting-houses. Estimating the cost of each house at only Five thousand dollars, the whole expense would amount to Nine Millions four hundred and fifty thousand dollars! Suppose this sum to be deposited in the Funds for the support of common schools, and the interest expended annually for the education of children of poor parents: Suppose a teacher would

instruct fifty scholars and his wages to be twenty dollars per month, the expense of educating fifty children one year, would be two hundred and forty dollars. The interest of Nine Millions Four Hundred and Fifty thousand dollars, being Six hundred and sixty-one thousand five hundred dollars, would pay the expences of educating One hundred and thirty-seven thousand eight hundred and twelve children. Allowing one minister to each meeting-house, there would be One thousand eight hundred and ninety. Supposing the salary and perquisites of each to be five hundred dollars; the maintenance of the whole would amount, annually, to Nine hundred and forty-five thousand dollars. This sum appropriated for the education of children as above proposed, would provide for the annual instruction of One hundred and ninety-six thousand eight hundred and seventy-five; which added to those that might be educated by the interest of the sum appropriated for the erection of meeting-houses, and the whole number of children which might be thus annually instructed, is *three hundred thirty-four thousand six hundred and eighty-seven!*"

Sunday Union.—Unceasing in their efforts to obtain an ascendancy destructive of our free institutions, we observe by the Philadelphia papers, that the devotees in that city have formed a society, auxiliary to the one lately got up in New-York, "for the purpose of promoting the better observance of the Christian Sabbath." At a meeting held in the Presbyterian Church on the 7th ult., consisting chiefly of clergymen, a committee of three was "appointed to ascertain whether any of the steam-boats running on the regular lines between New-York and Baltimore, will desist running at all on the Sabbath." At a subsequent meeting, says a correspondent, held in the Tabernacle on the 13th ult., (present about 100 persons—two thirds of whom were clergymen, and several of them women) Capt. Weldham, of the steam-boat Baltimore, was strongly recommended to the meeting as a person deserving of support, because he had agreed from the most *pious* motives, not to run his boat on Sunday. In the course of the discussion, however, it leaked out, unfortunately for the captain's piety, and that of his ghostly recommenders, that he received a premium or bribe of fifty dollars for every Sunday that he discontinued running his boat. This fact we give on the most undoubted authority. The silence of the Philadelphia papers respecting it, only shows that the authors of the deception may carry a point so far, as to make them ashamed even of their own duplicity.

Mr. Owen, who arrived in this city on Saturday Evening last, on his way to Europe, delivered a lecture in Tammany Hall, on Wednesday Evening, on the Social System, to a numerous and respectable audience. On his return to the United States, which he expects will be in about four months, Mr. O. intends delivering a regular course of Lectures in all the principal cities and towns in the Union; and on the second Monday of April next, he will be at Cincinnati to meet Mr. Campbell, the Baptist preacher, at his special request, to discuss Mr. Owen's challenge to the Clergy, when he was at New Orleans in January last. The following are the points on which the parties have joined issue:

"I propose to prove, as I have already done in my lectures,

"That all the religions of the world have been founded on the ignorance of mankind;

"That they are directly opposed to the never changing laws of nature;

"That they have been and are the real source of vice, disunion, and misery of every description ;

"That they are now the only real bar to the formation of a society of virtue, of intelligence, of charity, in its most extended sense, and of sincerity and kindness among the whole human family ; And

"That they can be no longer maintained except through the ignorance of the mass of the people, and the tyranny of the few over that "mass." ROBERT OWEN."

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE PRAYER OF NANG-SI,

Translated out of the Original Chinese.

"O Tien, the adorable ! we worship thee, although we have no proof of thine existence, seeing thou art inaccessible to our senses ; neither can it be demonstrated by those who talk to us in thy name. But as our legislators have made unbelief of thee criminal, we prostrate our understanding at the altar of their power, and bow submissive before thy throne. O Tien, the unknown ! our doctors call thee a pure spirit, which is nothing that we know. They term thee infinite, occupying all space, which is matter. They say thou art eternal ; for no one can conceive a time when matter did not exist. They entitle thee omnipotent : for nature's laws cannot be broken. They give thee the appellation of immutable,—as the course of things never change. Again, O Tien, the Holy !—thy priests and favorites tell us of having seen thee ; and they say thou art possessed of human parts, together with human passions, But yet, O Tien, who inhabits the thick darkness ! all allow that thy nature is inscrutable ; and thy essence incomprehensible. Accordingly, they have formed thee of negations, and clothed thee with inconsistent qualities and contradictory attributes. And thus, O Tien ! thou becomest all things to all men.

O Tien, who fillest all space ! let us approach thy throne, and humble ourselves before thee, who does not regard the attitudes of men. O thou, who knowest all things, condescend to be informed of our wants ; and we will inform thee how things go on here below. From thy omniscience nothing can be hid ; therefore do we come to confess our faults before thee, and make known our transgressions, because we have sinned and offended against thy holy law, in consequence of thy fore-ordaining every action of our lives. Yea, thou art an independent and Almighty Being, who cannot be offended, or want any of our futile offices. O Tien, who art unchangeable, the same yesterday, to day, and forever, change, we pray thee, the eternal laws of nature, which alter not : let events become uncertain and fluctuating,—destroy the necessary connexion between cause and effect, to gratify our whim and caprice. O Tien, the immutable ! change, we pray thee, the nature of the elements, stop the gravitation of bodies, and alter the weather, so as to suit us ; and we sincerely hope thou wouldst hear us in these respects, as we have been told that thou hast often repented and changed thy mind. Infinitely wise Tien, who pronounced every thing very good, we thy mole-eyed children have sagacity enough to see that the plans of thy infinite wisdom are not suited to our circumstances to procure us that happiness we so ardently wish ; and we believe that thou once intended

to destroy thy own work, because it pleased thee not. We beseech thee be pleased to patch and mend this work of thine as we shall give the directions, and comply with all the contradictory demands of the human race to please the folly of man. O Tein! we know that justice is a human virtue; allow us to call thee just, and, as a consequence, act contrary to all our conception of justice; fall out with thy children, the work of thine hands, and condemn them to eternal torments, for acting according to the laws of that nature thou gave them; for describing that course thou caused them to pursue; impute the sins thou predestinated them to commit to thy dear Son Fo (*who is also thy self*) whom thou sent to suffer for man's disobedience; then forgive them freely all they owe thee, after being paid to the very utmost, still retaining the far greatest number as victims of thy everlasting vengeance, for thy mercy endureth for ever!!

O Thou who art the Father of All! take a liking for only a few of thy creatures; pick out the most barbarous and wicked people on earth for thy chosen; communicate thy secrets, and reveal thy will to the most worthless among this banditti; and may these favorites of thine become patterns of moral conduct for all nations to imitate. For thy loving kindness and tender mercy sake, O Tien! and because thou hast made of one flesh all the nations of the earth, pour out thy wrath and indignation, we pray thee, on the rest of thy children; make them slaves to toil and sweat for thy chosen people; or harden their hearts to defend their lives and property; and thus give thy favorites an opportunity of killing them with impunity, and destroying every thing that breatheth that thy infinite goodness may be manifest to all people. O Tein! fountain of reason,—prevent us, we pray thee, from being guided by its dictates in any of our religious concerns. May we continue blind, and obstinately attached to the most ridiculous follies and glaring absurdities, if recommended to us by thy priests as coming from thee. May we never be so impious as to compare the works which we see with the stories they tell concerning thee. O Tein! who made us what we are,—gave us a nature we cannot change,—governs us by circumstances we cannot alter,—and has placed us in a situation we cannot mend,—pardon all our sins, we pray thee, through the merits of the atoning blood of thy Son Fo;—for thy grace faileth never.

O Tien! we know thou created every thing for thine own glory; thou must therefore be vain and fond of flattery as we are; accept, we beseech thee, of our adulation, and be highly pleased with the fine things we shall call thee. We thank thee, O Tien! for the bounties of nature; and that, by a wise dispensation of thy providence, a few tyrants devour the choicest of our blessings, leaving the rest of their fellow men to toil, hunger, and want. We thank thee, O Tien! that, being a good father, thou put thy innocent Son to death to satisfy thy justice, and thus gave us a grand example of paternal affection; this we praise thee for, and call it the wonders of redeeming love. O Tien! we laud and praise thy name for calling all, and electing only some to the enjoyment of eternal felicity. We also thank thee that disregarding merit and virtue, thou hast set wide the gates of heaven to blind credulity and bigot zeal, and has made the belief of whims and absurdities the only sure

passport to the celestial regions ; and has made that undefinable quality, faith, which we can never acquire, unless it is given us by thyself, the only sure road to heaven,—reason and virtue being no guides to that blessed place. And, as thou hast thus been pleased to people paradise with the scourges of the human race, we hope, O Tien ! few men of sense or virtue will choose such company. All glory, honor, and praise, be thine, O Tien ! evermore. Amen.

St. Gregory,—Many miracles are related of St. Gregory, as that going to bless a church in honor of St. Agnes, which had been used by the Arians, he caused the relics to be placed on the altar, whereon a hog went grunting out of the church with a fearful noise ; whence it was averred that the devil, who had been served in it by the heretic Arians, was driven out by the relics. Sometimes the lamps were miraculously lighted. One day a bright cloud descended on the altar, with a heavenly odour, so that from reverence no one dared to enter the church. At another time, when Gregory was transubstantiating the wafers a woman laughed ; he asked her why she laughed ? to which at length she answered, “ because you call the bread which I made with my own hands the body of our Lord ; ” whereupon he prayed and the consecrated bread appeared flesh to every one present ; and the woman was converted, and the rest were confirmed. At another time, some ambassadors coming to Rome for relics, Gregory took a linen cloth which had been applied to the body of a saint, and inclosing it in a box gave it to them. While on their journey home they were curious to see the contents of the box ; and finding nothing within it but the cloth, returned to St. Gregory complaining that he had deceived them. On this he took the cloth, laid it on the altar, prayed, pricked it with a knife, the cloth shed blood, and the astonished ambassadors reverently took back the box. Another time one who had been excommunicated by St. Gregory for having put away his lawful wife, bargained with certain sorcerers and witches for revenge ; who when the holy pope rode through the city, sent the devil into his horse, and made him caper, so that he could not be held : then with the sign of the cross the pope cast out the devil, and the witches by miracle becoming blind were converted, and St. Gregory baptized them ; yet would not restore their sight, lest they should read their magical books again, but maintained them out of the church rents. After his death there was a famine in Rome, and the people being falsely persuaded that St. Gregory had wasted the church property, gathered his writings to burn them ; wherefore Peter, the deacon, who had been intimate with Gregory, affirmed, that “ he had often seen the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove upon St. Gregory’s head whilst he was writing, and that it would be an insufferable affront to burn those books, which had been written by his inspiration ; and to assure them of this he offered to confirm it by oath, but stipulated that if he died immediately after he had taken the oath, they should believe that he had told them the truth : this being assented to he took the oath, and thereupon died, and the people believed ; and “ hence the painters came to represent St. Gregory, with a dove at his ear, to signify that the Holy Ghost inspired and dictated what he writ.”

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Free Press Association.—The regular monthly meeting of the "Free Press Association," will be held in the Lecture room in the "Temple of Science," (formerly the Bethel Academy,) Elizabeth-street, between Houston and Bleeker streets, on Sunday. (to-morrow) August 3d, at half past 10 o'clock forenoon. A punctual attendance is requested. In the afternoon, a Theological Lecture will be delivered at 4 o'clock.

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